

REMARKS

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1 – 31. With this Amendment, Applicant has amended claims 1 – 3, 5, 8, 10, 12, 14, 15, 17 – 19, 25, 30, and 31, has canceled claims 13, 22, and 26, and added claims 40 - 46. The application now includes claims 1 – 12, 14 – 21, 23 – 25, and 27 – 46.

Applicant hereby encloses a Petition for One-Month Extension of Time and a Credit Card Payment Form in the amount of \$ 60.00.

The Examiner objected to claims 14 and 15 in that the word “device” should be changed to “bladder”. With this Amendment, Applicant has amended claims 14 and 15 in accordance with the Examiner’s instructions. Therefore, it is respectfully requested that the objection to claims 14 and 15 be withdrawn and that claims 14 and 15 be held allowable.

REJECTION OF CLAIMS UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 112

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 17, 18, 30, and 31 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. With this Amendment, Applicant has amended claims 17, 18, 30, and 31 in accordance with the Examiner’s instructions. Therefore, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of claims 17, 18, 30, and 31 be withdrawn and that claims 17, 18, 30, and 31 be held allowable.

REJECTION OF CLAIMS UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1 – 4 and 10

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1 – 4 and 10 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by the Neumann et al patent. Applicant respectfully disagrees.

Claims 1 – 3 have been amended to better define the invention of the present application. In particular, claim 1 has been amended to claim the second end of the first support bladder and the second end of the second support bladder being free from connection such that the second ends are open and movable in a general direction toward each other. Claim 2 has been amended to claim the first end of the first support bladder and the first end of the second support bladder being angled in a generally upward direction relative to the second end of the first

support bladder and the second end of the second support bladder when the first support bladder and the second support bladder are positioned on a substantially horizontal surface. Claim 3 has been amended to claim the second end of the first support bladder and the second end of the second support bladder being angled in a generally downward direction to a point nearingly adjacent the water when the support device is positioned on a substantially horizontal surface such that a watercraft is capable of being driven over the angled portion onto the first support bladder and the second support bladder.

The Neumann et al patent neither teaches nor suggests an inflatable watercraft support device as claimed in the present application. The Neumann et al patent merely describes an inflatable boat having tubular elements 10 and 11 connected with one another which is closed in the stern region by means of a stern bulkhead 17. See, column 5, lines 52 – 54. Both the boat bottom 13 and the stern bulkhead of the inflatable boat of the Neumann et al patent are water-tightly connected to the lateral tubular elements 10 and 11. See, column 5, lines 55 – 57. Furthermore, the stern bulkhead 17 of the Neumann et al patent can be reinforced and rigidified by a solid stern board 18. See, column 5, lines 57 – 59.

The inflatable watercraft support device as claimed in claim 1 of the present application specifically claims that the second ends of the first and second support bladders are open and movable in a general direction toward each other. This allows a watercraft to be driven directly onto the support device of the present invention without interference or obstruction. With the stern bulkhead 17 of the Neumann et al patent, the stern region of the inflatable boat is not free from connection means such that the tubular elements 10 and 11 are open and movable in a general direction toward each other. Unlike the claims of the present application, the stern bulkhead 17 would actually interfere and obstruct with loading a watercraft from the water. Therefore, it is believed that claim 1 of the present application is allowable over the Neumann et al patent.

In addition, as illustrated in FIG. 1 of the Neumann et al patent, both ends of the tubular elements 10 and 11 are angled upward when the inflatable boat is positioned on the water. The Examiner further stated, however, that the first ends of the inflatable boat of the Neumann et al patent will be angled upward and the second ends will be sloped downward when the boat is

beached on an incline. Claim 2, as amended, of the present application specifically claims that the first ends of the first and second support bladders are angled in a generally upward direction relative to the second ends of the first and second support bladders when the first and second support bladders are positioned on water. Claim 3 has been amended to claim the second ends of the first and second support bladders are angled in a generally downward direction to a point nearingly adjacent the water when the support device is positioned on the water such that a watercraft is capable of being driven over the angled portion onto the first and second support bladders. Claim 4 claims the first and second support bladders tapering downward from the first end to the second end. Once again, the angling upward of the stern of the inflatable boat of the Neumann et al patent actually interferes with loading watercraft from the water. Therefore, it is believed that claims 2 – 4 are allowable over the Neumann et al patent.

Therefore, since the Neumann et al patent neither teaches nor suggests the inflatable watercraft support device as claimed in the present application, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of claims 1 – 4 and 10 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) be withdrawn and that claims 1 – 4 and 10 be held allowable.

Claims 1 – 3, 6, 8 – 13, and 16

The Examiner rejected claims 1 – 3, 6, 8 – 13, and 16 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by the Manson et al patent. Applicant respectfully disagrees.

Claim 13 has been canceled. Amendments to claims 1 – 3 have been discussed above.

The Manson et al patent neither teaches nor suggests the inflatable watercraft support device as claimed in the present application. The Manson et al patent merely describes a life raft having flotation tubes 11 and 12 which are fastened together on both ends by tie cords or lacing 16. As stated above, claim 1 has been amended to claim the second ends of the first and second support bladders are free from connection means such that they are open and movable in a general direction toward each other. The ends of the life raft of the Manson et al patent are neither open nor movable in a general direction toward each other and would interfere and obstruct with the loading of a watercraft from the water. Furthermore, claims 2 and 3 have been amended to claim

the angling from the first ends to the second ends when the support device is positioned on a substantially horizontal surface for loading a watercraft from the water without interference.

Therefore, since the Manson et al patent neither teaches nor suggests the inflatable watercraft support device as claimed in the present application, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of claims 1 – 3, 6, 8 – 12, and 16 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) be withdrawn and that claims 1 – 3, 6, 8 – 12, and 16 be held allowable.

Claims 1 and 5

The Examiner rejected claims 1 and 5 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by the Luscombe et al patent. Applicant respectfully disagrees.

Claim 5 of the present application has been amended to claim the connecting means being a single first aperture formed in the first end of the first support bladder and a single second aperture formed in the second end of the second support bladder and a pin mechanism directly insertable into each aperture.

The Luscombe et al patent neither teaches nor suggests the inflatable watercraft support device as claimed in the present application. The Luscombe et al patent merely describes an inflatable boat having inflatable side members 14 with the individual sections of the inflatable side members held together by attachment flaps 26. Each of the attachment flaps 26 is provided with a plurality of vertically spaced apart loops 27 for receiving an elongate attachment element 28 therethrough. See, column 3, lines 26 – 31. The stern section 13 is provided with a transom 37 formed of a plastic material extending between and secured to the side members of the stern sections. See, column 4, lines 30 – 34.

Claim 1 of the present application specifically claims the second ends of the first and second support bladders are open and movable in a general direction toward each other. The transom 37 of the Luscombe et al patent closes the second ends of the inflatable side members 11 and does not allow the second ends to move in a general direction toward each other. Closing of the second end of the inflatable side members 11 actually interferes and obstructs with the loading and unloading of a watercraft.

In addition, claim 5 now claims that the first end of the first support bladder has a single first aperture and the first end of the second support bladder has a single second aperture with a pin mechanism directly insertable into each aperture. This allows the second ends to move toward and away from each other to adjust the distance between the second ends. The attachment flaps 26 of the Luscombe et al patent are not single apertures but rather a series of loops which interlock maintaining the spacing of the inflatable side members 11 in a fixed position.

Therefore, since the Luscombe et al patent neither teaches nor suggests the inflatable watercraft support device as claimed in the present application, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of claims 1 and 5 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) be withdrawn and that claims 1 and 5 be held allowable.

Claims 1, 6, 7, and 12 – 19

The Examiner rejected claims 1, 6, 7, and 12 – 19 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by the Moody patent. Applicant respectfully disagrees.

Claims 1, 17, 18, and 19 of the present application have been amended to better define the present invention. Amendments to claim 1 have been discussed above. Claim 17 has been amended to claim a first cleat receiving pocket on the first support bladder and at least one cleat receivable within the first cleat receiving pocket for maintaining the position of the first support bladder when positioned upon land, ice, or snow. Claim 18 has been amended to claim a second cleat receiving pocket on the second support bladder and at least one cleat receivable within the second cleat receiving pocket for maintaining the position of the second support bladder when positioned upon the land, ice, or snow. Claim 19 has been amended to claim the first end of the first bladder and the first end of the second bladder being angled in a generally upward direction relative to the second end of the first bladder and the second end of the second bladder when the first support and the second bladder are positioned on a substantially horizontal surface.

The Moody patent neither teaches nor suggests the inflatable watercraft support device as claimed in the present application. The Moody patent merely describes an inflatable floating boat lift having air chambers 6A and 6B and a front air chamber 8. The ends of the air chambers

6A and 6B are not open and movable in a general direction toward each other, as claimed in the present application, since the air chambers 6A and 6B are in connected together (as indicated by the single line between the air chambers in FIG. 2) and, in another embodiment, a rigid trough 72 thereby maintaining the spacing of the air chambers 6A and 6B.

In addition, the Moody patent fails to describe a cleat receiving pocket and a cleat receivable within the cleat receiving pocket, as claimed in the present application. Furthermore, the Moody patent fails to describe the first end of the first bladder and the first end of the second bladder being angled in a generally upward direction relative to the second end of the first bladder and the second end of the second bladder when the first support and the second bladder are positioned on a substantially horizontal surface.

Therefore, since the Moody patent neither teaches nor suggests the inflatable watercraft support device as claimed in the present application, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of claims 1, 6, 7, and 12 – 19 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) be withdrawn and that claims 1, 6, 7, and 12 – 19 be held allowable.

Claims 19, 20 – 24, and 29

The Examiner rejected claims 19, 20 – 24, and 29 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by the Sear et al patent. Applicant respectfully disagrees.

Claim 22 has been canceled. Amendments to claim 19 have been discussed above.

The Sear et al patent neither teaches nor describes the inflatable watercraft support device as claimed in the present application. The Sear et al patent merely describes a composite boat having a gunwale 5 in two cylindrical sections 6 and 7. Claim 19 claims the first end of the first bladder and the first end of the second bladder being angled in a generally upward direction relative to the second end of the first bladder and the second end of the second bladder when the first support and the second bladder are positioned on a substantially horizontal surface. Since the sections 6 and 7 are cylindrical, the gunwale 5 of the Sear et al patent is not angled as claimed in the present application.

Therefore, since the Sear et al patent neither teaches nor suggests the inflatable watercraft support device as claimed in the present application, it is respectfully requested that the rejection

of claims 19, 20, 21, 23, 24, and 29 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) be withdrawn and that claims 19, 20, 21, 23, 24, and 29 be held allowable.

REJECTION OF CLAIMS UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Examiner rejected claims 19, 25 – 28, 30, and 31 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Sear et al patent in view of the Mambretti patent. Applicant respectfully disagrees.

Claim 26 has been canceled. Claims 19, 30, and 31 of the present application have been amended to better define the present invention. Amendments to claim 19 have been discussed above. Claim 30 has been amended to claim a first cleat receiving pocket on the first support bladder and at least one cleat receivable within the first cleat receiving pocket for maintaining the position of the first support bladder when positioned upon land, ice, or snow. Claim 31 has been amended to claim a second cleat receiving pocket on the second support bladder and at least one cleat receivable within the second cleat receiving pocket for maintaining the position of the second support bladder when positioned upon the land, ice, or snow.

As discussed above, the Sear et al patent neither teaches nor suggests the invention as claimed in the present application. The Mambretti patent adds nothing to the Sear et al patent to teach or suggest the present application. The Mambretti patent merely describes an inflatable boat having handles. It fails to describe the first end of the first bladder and the first end of the second bladder being angled in a generally upward direction relative to the second end of the first bladder and the second end of the second bladder when the first support and the second bladder are positioned on a substantially horizontal surface, as claimed in claim 19 of the present application. Furthermore, the Mambretti patent fails to describe a cleat receiving pocket and a cleat receivable within the cleat receiving pocket, as claimed in claims 30 and 31 of the present application.

Therefore, since neither the Sear et al patent nor the Mambretti patent either teaches or suggests the inflatable watercraft support device as claimed in the present application, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of claims 19, 25, 27, 28, 30, and 31 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be withdrawn and that claims 19, 25, 27, 28, 30, and 31 be held allowable.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that the present application is in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and allowance of claims 1 – 12, 14 – 21, 23 – 25, and 27 – 46 is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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